

# MILL GIRLS' SATURDAYS GALA DAYS IN PATERSON.

When the Noon Whistles Blow There's a Great Homeward Rush  
--Then for the Fun--A Ball in Apollo Hall and, Alas! the  
Bar, Which Is Not Nice in Any Way.

By CATHERINE KING.

In two previously published papers The Evening World's special woman writer, Catherine King, has told of workday Paterson and the long days of toil which confront the girl employees of the city's great mills.

## No. 3. BALLS AND BACK ROOMS.

SATURDAY is a great day in Paterson. The mills close at noon, and you may be sure that the closing whistle having blown, it does not take the girls long to scramble into their street clothes and head themselves to their homes.

I learned of this rather by accident. I was standing on a street corner in one of the mill districts, waiting for a car. Usually I have to wait, too, and all of a sudden the mill whistles began their unearthly screeching.

"Gracious goodness!" exclaimed I, clapping my hands to my ears.

"Gracious goodness!" echoed a merry dame, the first to escape from bondage.

"Didn't you ever hear a closing whistle before?"

Before I had time to answer, she was off and a whole pack of others after her, and in less time than it takes to tell the street was flooded with them.

It was Saturday. And I will have you understand that Saturday is quite the important day of the week.

Mill Girls at Large.

From noon until midnight the curious stranger has ample time to study that species of femininity known as the Paterson "mill girl."

He will see her doing that which pleases her best.

Sometimes it is in taking long walks that she finds her pleasure and recreation, but she seldom takes walks into the country. It is usually about town, where she may gaze her fill at the main street shop windows, laden with their tempting treasures of cheap finery.

For the mill girls delight in bright and catchy wearing apparel.

Very frequently she has purchases of her own to make, and the half holiday is spent in careful shopping.

I overheard a very interesting conversation between two girls on the afternoon of which I wrote.

"I'm going to get her a petticoat for her birthday--of course she doesn't know anything about it yet."

"Oh, how perfectly lovely! Have you got the money to get it with today?"

"Yes, and I've been looking around."

A Petticoat Bargain.

Then they trotted off in quest of the birthday present.

It is needless to say that the deplorable exasperation followed by the girl, who had to wait for her little petticoat, after a week's salary on a silk petticoat, but the little mill girl did not mind the loss.

She bought a pretty green percale skirt, with an elaborately plaided ruffle, and all she paid for it was \$1.95.

I came very near to purchasing one for myself. The bargain instinct nearly got the better of me, but I am quite sure that you could not have purchased that same skirt in New York for less than \$2.50.

The fact that they had none in black, and I did not want a green petticoat.

No, however, over the jewelry counter, I watched my friends purchase some little gold earrings, and did like.

The pins were five cents apiece, and I shall keep them to remember the mill girls by when I am far away from Paterson, and the little mill girl's case is perhaps only a memory.

They Love Bright Colors.

As I have said before, the mill girls are exceedingly fond of bright colors. This is more noticeable on a holiday than on any other time.

On working days she is a poor, drab-colored creature, but on Saturdays and Sundays she blooms into a gorgeous butterfly.

It would be the heart of a cynic good to see just how thoroughly enjoyable people who work hard all the week can make their play time.

Such merry chattering throngs I have never seen before. Such wholesome pleasure would I never be found among those whose every hour is a playtime.



LIFE OF THE PATERSON MILL GIRL.

"Oh, yes, I can tell you," she said pleasantly. "It's around the other side of the block. If you come with me I'll show you."

"Thank you. The Dean is well loved by all of you tell me," I said by way of making conversation.

"Yes, indeed. Are you a stranger here?"

"Yes, I'm a stranger in Paterson. And you?"

"Oh, I'm one of the Paterson 'mill girls,' she said smiling.

"Are you? Then you're just the person I want to see. Can you tell me anything about them?"

"Oh, she said deprecatingly, 'the papers have said so much about us that I am unkind. Please don't say that all of us are bad.'

"Consolation and the Girl."

"You have no idea how hard some of the girls work, and how little pleasure they get. My conscience won't allow me to say anything of any one. No matter how bad a person might be, I would never say anything in judgment of them."

"You are certainly a conscientious girl. I said, guiltily working over various things I have said in my mind. I don't want to say anything of any one. I don't want to say anything of any one. I don't want to say anything of any one."

"No, never! I never let myself think of them, except to hope that through the years they may learn to become better. That is my prayer for them. And that is my prayer for them. And that is my prayer for them."

"I wonder if there have been many others in Paterson besides the little working girl who pray that through the years they may learn to become better. That is my prayer for them. And that is my prayer for them. And that is my prayer for them."

"Did you know Jennie Benschoter?"

"I asked."

"You see I knew her very well. We both worked together in the Paterson silk ribbon mill. Jennie was a nice girl. I liked her very much."

Bright Jennie Benschoter.

"And she is bright and lively?"

"Indeed she is. Why, the only way I can describe Jennie right is to say that she was just a great overgrown school girl, laughing and being merry all the time. You have no idea how badly the girls in the mill feel when they are not having fun."

"Then my companion tripped off, after saying good-night, and I was left with one more good impression of the Paterson 'mill girl.'"

"There is certainly one good Christian in Paterson at least, and she is a mill girl."

Now, mind you, my good Paterson friend, I am not saying that she is the only one by any means."

Mill Girls' Ball.

There was a ball in Apollo Hall. Perhaps you do not know the significance of a mill girls' ball. It is a highly important affair and helps wonderfully to keep alive the social side of the mill life.

As I have said, I have received the impression that these balls were more or less rowdy entertainments. The one in Apollo Hall was not of this nature.

Certainly was not a formal affair, either. Mill girls do not have any too much money to spend on such things. The dress was a simple affair, usually black with a touch of bright color, and not a few wore flannel coat jackets. There was no 'glitzy' present. But there were lots of mill boys, and they escorted all the girls, and their escorts all at the same time. And their escorts all at the same time. And their escorts all at the same time.

At the back of the hall, facing the entrance, was a small stage of platform, where the musicians were seated. There are about a half dozen of them, and they played a species of music that would be terrifying to a critical dancer. But fortunately the dancers did not appear to be in the least.

Stairs lead down from the dancing floor to a cellar, under, and this is called the 'bar.'"

Bar Not Nice.

It is not a nice place to spend much time. There are tables and chairs rather the worse for much using, and a wooden floor that is on the verge of being worn out. The walls are all the tables, and their orders are filled by a young man who is not much to look at. The drinking glasses are washed by a young man who is not much to look at. The drinking glasses are washed by a young man who is not much to look at.



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So don't believe that every mill girl you see in Paterson walking the streets after dark is in quest of evil. She does not seek it. It runs her down and hunts her in. Ask any decent citizen of that city and he will tell you the same story.

Root of Evil.

And this brings me to a side of the social life in Paterson on which I have so far failed to touch. I have done this purposely, hoping that in some way I might be excused from saying anything of any one. But it has not come out.

A certain society woman of Paterson said to me:

"If you want to know why Paterson morals are at such a low ebb I will tell you, only, she said, 'please do not use my name in the paper.'"

"That is a fault she has in common with several others. They seem to have a peculiar dread of seeing their names in print."

"One finger--up!"

"A sane and two up!"

"The one all two up" means better; the others are wrong. And I feel that they are to be solved by a local revolution."

However right or wrong it may be, the bar is well patronized.

In fact there are nearly seven hundred bars in Paterson. As we well know, these are the worst of the city. I have not yet made up my mind whether the dancing in Apollo Hall is the worst of the city, or whether the dancing in the bars is the worst of the city.

Revolution Needed.

"The whole political structure is corrupt, and the only thing on earth that will clear matters out is a local revolution."

I asked: "All of you decent people, surely there are enough of you."

"Quite enough, and mark my words, we're going to have it quicker than you think."

I solemnly trust that this lady may be right.

The saloon business in Paterson, at least, needs to be revolutionized.

Every saloon in the city carries on its back-room traffic, and often in defiance of the law. Girls and boys under age are kept in the saloons, and are used for the purpose of seduction, and even were they to come face to face with a policeman on duty, they would not care to leave the place. In a word, the saloon is a place where the law is not respected, and the law is not respected.

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CHILDREN'S HATS, comprising felt knockabouts, Alpines, Tams and other shapes, reg. 49c, 59c and 69c, to close... 25c  
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MISSIE'S STYLISHLY TRIMMED VELVET HATS, with ruffle brim, rosette of silk and velvet in combination colors, and nine fine tucks on crown, all colors, reg. \$1.95... 1.98

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